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Huntsman signs film incentive, \$115M bond bill

State stimulus » Movie perk could mean 4,500 jobs

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Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. signed three dozen bills into law Monday, aimed at protecting musicians from copycat acts, pumping up the state's film industry, changing how the state tracks sex offenders, and pulling state money out of Sudan.

The governor also approved \$115 million in state bonds, to construct nine buildings, mainly on the state's college and university campuses.

SB14 dangles about \$15 million over two years, meant to entice film, television and commercial productions to the state.

Jason Perry, director of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, said the state's film incentive lagged behind its neighbors and, because of a \$500,000 cap in place, big-budget films that expressed interest in the state -- like Transformers or G.I. Joe -- wouldn't shoot here. And there hasn't been a television series filming in the state since 2006.

"This makes it so we can still take care of the small films which are our bread and butter but still give a meaningful incentive to the big budget films," Perry said.

The change brings to \$10 million a year the amount the state is spending on the incentive, which Perry said would create 4,500 jobs and generate millions more.

"Every dollar we put out will generate two-and-a-half dollars," Perry said.

There is also hope that a film studio will open in the state, and there has been some discussion of one opening in Park City.

Other bills Huntsman signed Monday include:

-- HB198, sponsored by Rep. Christine Johnson, D-Salt Lake City, allows couples filing for a marriage license to elect to pay \$10 toward a domestic violence training program;

-- HB247, sponsored by Rep. Jim Bird, R-West Jordan, drops a requirement that sex offenders provide the state with their passwords for e-mail and Internet accounts, after the state lost a lawsuit over the requirement;

-- SB184, sponsored by Sen. Greg Bell, R-Fruit Heights, will increase the fee charged to file a civil case in state courts, a move aimed at helping the courts generate an estimated \$500,000 in revenue and avoid major layoffs and reductions;

-- SB39, sponsored by Sen. Scott Jenkins, R-Plain City, will require any business contracting with the state to verify the legal presence of its workers;

-- HB457, sponsored by Rep. Greg Hughes, R-Draper, outlaws imposter musical acts from marketing themselves as the original production;

-- HB436, sponsored by Rep. David Litvack, D-Salt Lake City, requires the state to adopt rules prohibiting any state contracts with companies doing business with the ruling government in Sudan, which the U.S. State Department has said engages in genocide.

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